

Tilt

Poems by Moira Macdonald



For words, like Nature, half reveal And half conceal the Soul within.

-Tennyson



With heartfelt thanks to Eileen, for her unwavering support, encouragement, and, most of all, her love, and to Heather, for her generous, patient guidance and loving friendship.



Tilt by © Moira Macdonald 2021

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission from the publisher: P.O. Box 194, Trentham 3458, Australia

ISBN 978-0-6450728-0-8 Paperback ISBN 978-0-6450728-1-5 eBook

Contents

Dawning
Cycles
And yet
Fallen tree
Grave
Journey of a soul
Dying days
What holds the universe together?
Faith
Nature
Disarm
A life was lived
Wombat
Fox
Leaf and I
I came upon a dying beast
Deep
With apologies to Doctor Faustus
The Farmer
The Word
Dust
And my kind
Tilt
Both

Dawning

Fog ascending; deep, pervasive

Peacefulness abounds.

Nature waking, calling, chirping

Envelop me with sounds.

Ashes lighten, senses heighten

Wanness lifts into a ray.

All is gladness and aliveness,

Welcoming another day.

Cycles

The deepening ochre of the sky,

With sombre hues, declares intent

To cast a watchful, graceful eye

On thoughts and hopes that ought be spent.

These beg for rest, for peace and end,

To breathe their last at eve's descent,

And tenderly be left to die.

One cycle turns, begins anew,

The tiny, precious life form grows,

To blossom, be, become, to flow,

With specks of knowledge is imbued.

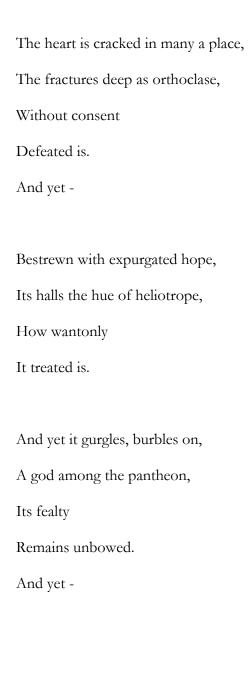
The golden, ever-rising sun

Breathes light and warmth and easy care,

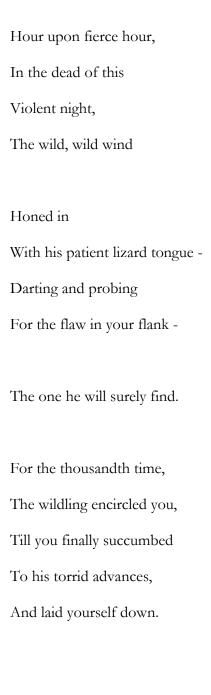
Till weariness and age declare

The span of life has been and done.

And yet



Fallen tree



Grave

My Grave I'll grace with Poppies and the Moon,

With stems of inflorescent Aconite,

Adorned, like Berenice's courtly tomb,

Wherein she slumbers, ever sacrificed.

The Moon I'll usher in to guard the gate,

Geminian dispassion e'er alert,

No heaving Helios shall violate

This dark, sepulchral grotto, nor subvert.

The Poppies strewn, a tapestry in red,

For bloody deeds that cannot be undone,

For Daughter's eyes ne'er opened, only bled,

For wars profane and frightful, riven Sons.

O, Aconite! My thrice-beheaded friend!

Medea's bane of wolf will serve me well,

The hooded monk my Soul will spirit hence,

To sleep, perturbed, eternally in Hell.

Journey of a soul

My Spirit had been marking time

For when it would be beckoned hence,

Restless shifting on its feet showed

Weariness of long pretence.

I'd drunk my years of learning dry,
Had slipped, but learnt from my conceit,
The open wounds, quick cauterized,
Forgiven what was indiscreet.

A pact I'd made with those beyond

To lend the strength within my arm,

With gentle thinking to respond;

All enmity and strife disarm.

In giving thus, my soul awoke

To nature's gracefulness again

To music, sweet, and words that spoke

Of love - as deep as this, ne'er known.

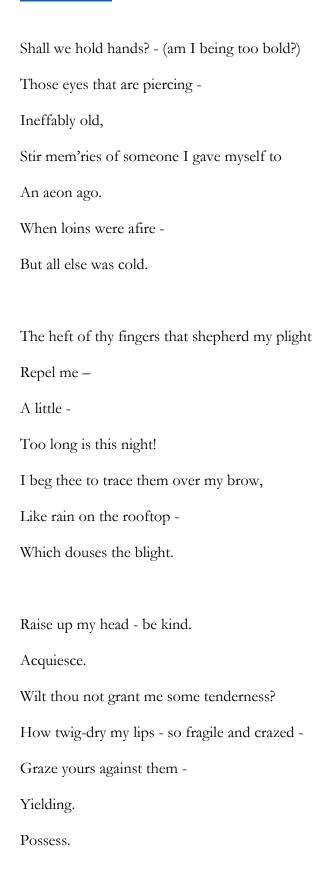
So willingly, I'll play my part

Enthralled anew with this fair plane,

Until the time one soul departs,

The other, freed, may do the same.

Dying days



Come lie down beside me,				
I'm tethered to thee,				
Dost thou recoil to see me this way?				
Be gentle - and tarry -				
Soon t'will be done				
Accosting the night -				
There's no haste any more -				
I beg thee for rest –				
Beseech thee.				
Tonight				
Enfold me in				
Thy embrace -				
Against thy breast –				
I die.				

What holds the universe together?

What holds the universe together?

What causes tides to rise and swell?

The thrush to pack its nest with down?

The thirst to know that won't be quelled?

From pulsing silences it springs,

From cricket's lonely chirruping,

All lies before you, to behold.

What holds the universe together

Is love, my child, is Love, is All,

From hand and heart and mind it flows,

Don't ponder on its rise and fall.

Embrace the wisdom at your core

And go, my child, to love some more,

And hold the universe together.

<u>Faith</u>

And seeds of mustard well believe

That all, with love, can be relieved.

To love another as He has loved,

That nothing enters from above.

They understand, "Go sin no more"

That kindness opens every door;

That what transpires is what is writ

That even mountains move a whit.

We would do well to gently heed

That faithful little mustard seed.

Nature

A bird proclaims itself at dawn,

Another trills, to greet the morn,

A third, a bright concerto starts,

The forest heaves with singing parts,

And calm descends upon my soul.

I marvel at the clouds above,

Embraced so tightly in god's love,

No cares, no woes, no knitted brow,

With easy naturalness endowed,

Drink deep, my yearning soul.

How does each creature know of love?

To play its role, from high above?

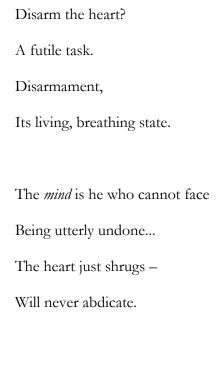
Oblivious to our travails,

With sweetest melodies regale

Our doubt-filled, straining souls.

When I, alone, at long day's end
With tiny wounds I aim to mend,
Recall the symphonies anew,
Then gladness bids my pain adieu
And love resides within my soul.

<u>Disarm</u>



A life was lived

They speak of death in muffled tones,

With bended knee before the pyre,

With beating breasts and clutching eyes,

Perceiving nought of what went prior.

A life was lived, it loved and breathed,

It wrestled demons - even gods,

Bore its children, gave of itself,

With its true purpose, was ne'er at odds.

Be glad, your hearts - arise, stand tall,

It ought be such a joyful day,

Farewell the soul that warmed your lives,

And freely send the barge away.

Wombat

Fat and black

And roundly packed,

Scampering before my feet.

It's far too late, you should get back

You *must* have had enough to eat.

Little fellow, I can hear you

Charging through the undergrowth,

In your haste to reach your burrow

Where I bet it's warm as toast...

[For Lucy]

Fox

Look! A fox!

Making haste to disappear,

Furtively she lowers down,

Watchful eye and flattened ear.

Are there little ones awaiting,

Hungry in your clever den?

Pay no mind to us, go forth!

Disregard the world of men!

[For Alex]

Leaf and I

I sipped the dew from a tiny leaf

On a slender branchlet, drooped,

That lingered on my walking path

And led to my rebuke.

The night was all but spent and,

With reluctance, giving way

To trenchant early sun rays

That precipitate the day.

No soul was there to witness

What my folly then proposed,

(And should there've been, I'll wager

They would think me indisposed)

The leaf, it offered moisture fresh,

I gladly did imbibe,

Oblivious to all -

To nature's wonder did ascribe.

I thought I heard the leaf cry, "Ho!

What give thee in return?

Gratuitous, you've quenched your thirst

My bounty thou must earn!"

"The nighttime frost and misty drops

Have chilled my inner bones.

Pray, hold me sweetly 'tween your lips

Your boldness to atone."

I took the precious leaflet,

Laid it gently on my tongue,

Careful not to rend it

From the branch that overhung.

I fancied 'twas my lover's lips,

And softly did I taste

Its downy skin, its rivulets -

Such trust in me it placed!

I warmed its inner venules,

Imperceptibly but true,

Pledging to this wellspring

I'd redeem myself anew.

We languidly uncoupled,

Leaf and I went separate ways,

My soul replete,

I happily embraced the morning rays.

I came upon a dying beast

I came upon a dying beast,

Its neck lay twisted up and bent,

What to do for its release?

Unflinching hand it surely meant.

"You can do this monstrous deed,

For do it now, you must"

What I felt is what I did -

T'was easy to adjust.

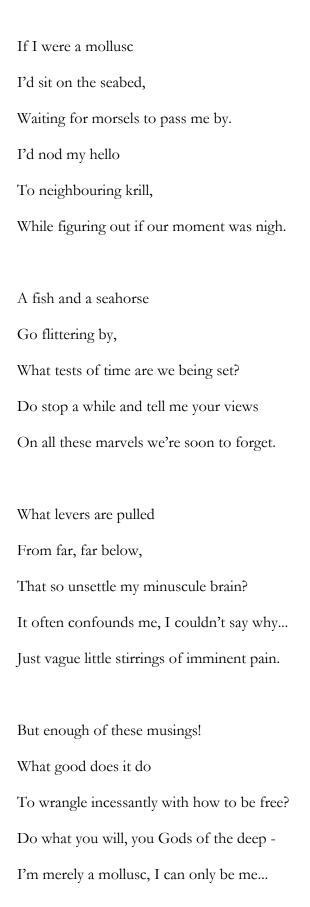
The final blow was firmly struck,

What I did with what I felt -

The beast, its ending breath did suck,

No feeling, in us both, now dwelt.

Deep



With apologies to Doctor Faustus

I, Thomas, forged a pact one night

With Satan's underling,

Oblivious to future plight

Her wiles I ushered in.

I'll wager she reported back

What gains she made with me,

To fawn and self-ingratiate

With Mephistopheles.

She vowed all earthly joys to share

With Bacchus' heady charms,

A panoply of lovers, fair

To languish in my arms.

"Your soul must be relinquished for

That prize belongs to me,

To place, triumphant, at the feet

Of Mephistopheles."

I countered her enticements, let

Her know I paid no heed

To revelry and wanton acts,

For my belov'd, I plead,

"Should this unholy compact win

My yearning heart some ease,

I'll aid your misbegotten quest

For Mephistopheles."

The deal was signed, in blood, no less,

My word was not enough,

Despite my dread, I must confess

No pact could be rebuffed.

The underling, her hand outstretched,

The bloodied parchment seized,

With reveries of lust assuaged

By Mephistopheles.

The years all passed in tragedy,

Much horror fast distilled,

My thoughts recalled the Devil and

The Faustian pact fulfilled.

My soul, in time, lay at his feet,

Self-slaughtered and diseased,

The underling's malod'rous gift

For Mephistopheles.

The Farmer

Whose house is this he passes, well before the greying morn?

(His trudging boots the only sound, with heavy thoughts, forlorn)

At woodland's rim, embraced it is, so low and self-assured,

A bastion of certitude, from every strife inured.

Whose head lies easy in its arms, in lavish sleep encased?

(Not fraught with horror's dread that sweetest birdsong can't erase)

A flurry of disheveled sage along its garden path,

By embers' glow, a cat stretched long - oh, happy home and hearth!

Before the haggard blackness lifts around him, he is gone,

(Melding with the scrub, the empty creek bed, whereupon -)

He lay himself to rest a while, with weariness o'ercome,

Heeding, with surprise, the rousing woodland's pulsing hum.

I'd seen this man, this neighbour, mine, attending to his fields,

(This, though, many weeks before we learned what lay concealed)

So curt of speech, his rugged hand the briefest greeting gave,

Then toiled he on - as toil he would - till ceding to the grave.

The Word

The Word digs in its talons

When we are unprepared,

Shunning scars already rent,

Untrammeled flesh its fare.

Letters writ in majuscule

Emblazoned in your skull,

Such, the might of Logos - Word

Will leave your soul dehulled.

As you catch a fleeting breath

It wheels around thrice more,

Vespa's unremitting stings

Eviscerate your core.

Till nought remains - Death waiting,

It circles, high above,

To grasp you tight within its wings

While mouthing one Word - 'Love'

Dust

When I reflect upon my life, near cold,

In the hours before the blackbird's piece

Enlivens me, I've a need to release

An invent'ry of deeds, plucked bare and bald;

For, come the day discerning rulers run

Across my span, my testimony's done.

Which spirit aide, with my defence, be tasked,

Before my soul's appointed judges seek

A deposition for missteps? Who speaks

For conduct, tooth-combed through and left unmasked?

What harm was wreaked? How have I interfered

With fateful chance on this confounding sphere?

Thus, carefully, they'll brush the dust, as though

In Egypt's cauldron, precious relics found;

So with my heart, the living's fireground,

Which way the scales will fall, the pebbles thrown?

To obfuscate on earth - how simple there!

But what my arbiters shall bring to bear?

And my kind

Don't say I can't love with a human love,

With the bravest love that applies

The wretched law of union-as-one,

From a cleavage a chasm-length wide.

Far better to stagger, ingloriously, home

Than to flutter above all the fray.

I'd happier pick at my leering wounds,

Than to drop on my knees and pray.

If offered a choice, when time to away

I'll stay with the slurry and grind,

To live and love an additional day,

Exulting with kin - and my kind.

Tilt

When shifting consciousness occurs
with a simultaneous tilt
of the earth's axis, spring begets
autumn in a pulsing heartbeat;
the larkspurs, their drunken shafts will
shed, like milt flaring heavenward;
grey-white winged and wheeling higher,
the kite hovers, addled - hovers
among clouds smeared across the blacklung sky, while the mayfly's lifespan
increases

All along the ripe'ning wheat fields, stroked, ardently, by the first waft of fall, scatter their teeming yields of the season's new harvest, oft unmatched in its abundancy, while evident for all who see and hear, the trumpeting out loud of their love and delight, unbowed, vuln'rable at the onslaught of Ares' son.

by point-o-nine of a second.

This is the synchronous shifting and tilt of the universal "T" and "You" – with the uplifting tune of like hearts; with dispersal of such good love and tenderness, that the gods themselves become less almighty of a sudden, to marvel at the audacious few who choose lives unbounded - autumnal - as spring.

Both

Tiny, precious bloom

Caught beneath my careless gait

For us both, no room...?



